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AN OUTLINE PLAN FOR THE STUDY OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

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[REMARK.—This outline is uniform with that presented in *THE STUDENT* (Dec. 1889) for the study of Romans, and is intended to serve the same purpose for students of the Galatian letter. Romans and Galatians may be profitably studied together on account of their general similarity of contents. This plan is adapted to the use of the student of the English Bible.]

I. PRELIMINARY STUDIES.

1. Read the entire epistle with a view to dividing it into its *three* natural divisions, (a) *apologetic*, in which the apostle defends himself and his teaching, (b) *doctrinal*, in which he explains and defends "his gospel," (c) *practical* or *hortatory*, in which he warns his readers against a possible abuse of his principles and adds exhortations regarding the Christian life.

2. Determine by this reading (or still better, by a *second* reading), (a) what were the personal objections or accusations against the apostle and his course of life, which had developed in the Galatian churches; (b) what were the grave doctrinal errors in which these accusations had their root.

3. Ascertain from the Acts, (a) what can be known of Paul's visits to Galatia and of his relation to the churches there; (b) seek in the Acts (cf. especially 15:1 with Gal. 2:12) any light that may be thrown upon the origin, opinions and spirit of the "false brethren" (Gal. 2:4) who were stirring up strife in Galatia.

4. In the light of the foregoing studies, define accurately (a) the *occasion*, (b) the *object* of the epistle.

II. CLOSER ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

Taking the *apologetic section*, note (a) the *salutation* and by comparing it with those of other Pauline letters, ascertain its *marked peculiarity* and the significance of this for the whole

letter. (b) How does the *polemic* element in Galatians differ from that in Romans? (c) Note *the point* of Ch. I and define the bearing upon it of each section of the chapter (as it is divided in the Rev. Ver.). (d) Determine *the point* of Ch. II. and observe the way in which it is supported by *two* series of facts and arguments.

2. In the *doctrinal portion*, study (a) the use made of the case of Abraham and define carefully the *principle* which is thereby established. (b) Note the relation which the apostle defines between the *gracious covenant of promise* and the *legal system*. (c) Observe the description of the *preparatory office* of the law in leading men to Christ, (d), the way in which Paul illustrates the difference between *freedom* of the gospel and *bondage* under the law. (e) Note his polemic against circumcision and account for it in the circumstances which called forth the epistle.

3. In the *practical portion* collate (a) the *warnings* against dangers to which the readers were especially exposed and (b) the *maxims* or *principles* for the Christian life.

III. EXEGESIS.

1. When the epistle has thus been analyzed and distributed into sections or topical divisions, a more critical study should be made of each part. (a) The writing of a *paraphrase* of a given section is a useful exercise. (b) Each obscure expression should receive careful attention. (c) The rapid rush of Paul's passionate thought in the epistle has occasioned many grammatical ellipses; the omitted or implied thought should be supplied by a study of the context. (d) In the doctrinal portion, study closely the characteristic *gospel principles* as opposed to the *legal principles*, determining thus the essential content of *Paul's gospel*. (e) Define carefully the relation between the *proto-gospel* ("covenant" or "promise") given to Abraham and the *legal system*; How is this original gospel related to Christianity, and what does this relation prove respecting the relation of *the law* to the *gospel of Christ*?

2. Study with special care the terms which represent the *Key-thoughts* of the epistle, such as: "*gospel*" (its origin and content), "*revelation*" (1:12, 16—when experienced?), "*the*

gospel of the circumcision" (2:7; how different from Paul's "gospel?") "*pillars*" (2:9, why so called?), "*dissimulation*" (2:13, Gk: "*hypocrisy*;" meaning and nature of?), "*no flesh justified by law*" (2:16 *et al.* why? cf. esp. Rom. 8:3), "*crucified with Christ*" (2:20, meaning and origin of this and kindred expressions; collate the passages from Gal. and other Eps. of Paul), "*reckoned for righteousness*" (what is reckoned, why and how?), "*covenant*," "*promise*," "*mediator*," "*kept in ward*," "*tutor unto Christ*," "*heir and bond-servant*," "*rudiments of the world*" "*weak and beggarly rudiments*," "*fallen away from grace*," "*freedom*," "*walk by the Spirit*," "*the flesh*" (works of), "*new creature*."

3. Certain passages, of special difficulty or importance, may be selected for more exhaustive study, such as 3:16; 3:20 and 4:24-31 (the three most difficult passages in the epistle). (a) Collate from commentaries the leading interpretations. (b) Carefully note the difficulties connected with each. (c) By study of the passage and comparison of views try to elaborate an opinion which shall be *your own*.

IV. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE EPISTLE.

[REMARK.—A few subjects are here given upon which it is thought that the studies outlined above would enable the student to form intelligent and comprehensive views.]

1. The teaching of the epistle respecting the *purpose of the law*. (a) The *origin* of the law. (b) The *mode* of its promulgation. (c) The *time* of its publication as related to the gracious promise. (d) Its *supplementary character* in its relation to the "proto-gospel." (e) Reasons why it *cannot justify*. (f) Its relation to sin; in what sense does it *increase sin*? (g) How can this aim of the law be harmonized with the common view that it was given to *check* transgressions? Does Paul recognize this latter purpose? (h) How does the law by *rousing the power of sin* lead to Christ? (i) Is the law abrogated by Christianity? If so in what sense? (j) Is it a direct prescriptive authority for the church and the Christian to-day?

2. Teaching respecting Redemption from the curse of the law by the cross of Christ. (a) What is the "curse of the law?" (b) What does the "cross" mean or symbolize for Paul? (c) How was Christ "made a curse for us?" (d) On

what grounds, then, will Paul "glory" only in the cross?

V. SPECIAL TOPICS.

1. Critical comparison of Gal. I and II with the corresponding narratives in the Acts with a view to exhibiting their similarities and differences.

2. Paul's use of allegory in the epistle and other alleged uses by him of "Rabbinic exegesis."

3. A comparison of the doctrinal method and content of Galatians with those of Romans.

4. A comparison of the Galatian heresies with those which existed in the church at Colossae with a view to showing in what different ways they threatened the integrity of the gospel.

5. The Apostle Paul as the champion of a universal gospel, including an examination of the nature and extent of his difference from the "pillar" apostles.

6. Paul's Doctrine of the Christian life as developed in Galatians.

7. Are the law and the gospel, in Paul's view, antagonistic and exclusive of each other; if not, may they become so and under what circumstances do they in fact become so?

8. The use of the Old Testament in the Galatian Epistle.

[REMARK.—The analysis is made more thorough-going than was the case in the former "Plan" and some of the topics are more difficult. I have proceeded on the supposition that if the former study had been pursued, the student would be able to do closer and more exacting work on this kindred (and in many respects easier) epistle.]